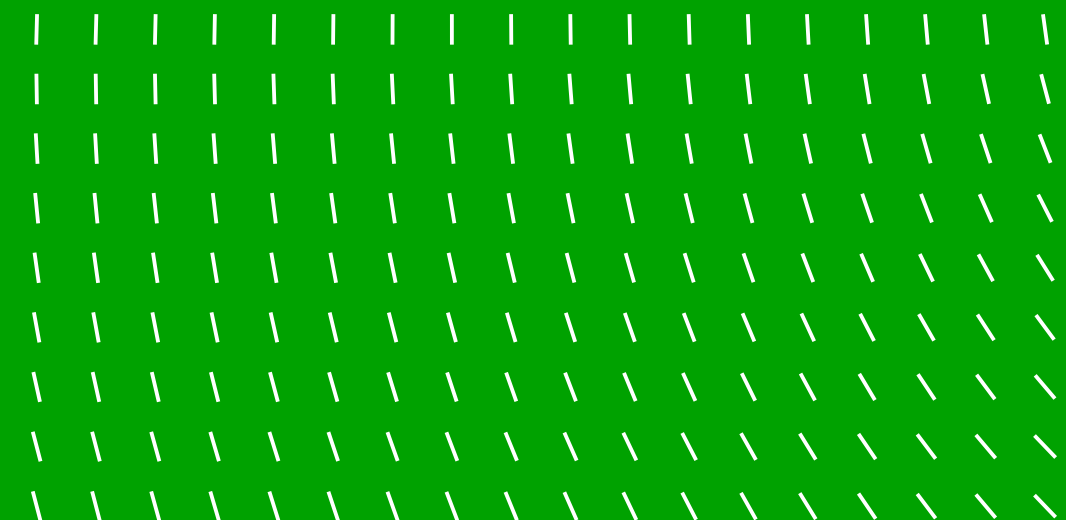




Building better workplace wellbeing

The Healthier Nation Index 2022





In the post-pandemic world, workplace wellbeing is now more important than ever. With new hybrid ways of working and the interconnected nature of our work and personal lives, wellbeing should be at the forefront of all organisations strategies for the future.

Research of this kind is invaluable to Nuffield Health and our partners. It helps inform us on the health of the nation today and guide healthcare service provision in the future.

We are proud not only to conduct this large-scale survey, but importantly, by sharing the results, we hope to ensure that others may benefit from our findings and we can fulfil our mission of building a healthier nation.

Marc Holl – Head of Primary Care

Healthier Nation Index

We’ve been putting the health of the nation first for more than 60 years. And as one of the UK’s largest providers of corporate healthcare services, a key focus is wellbeing in the workplace, and that’s where the Nuffield Health Healthier Nation Index comes in.

The Healthier Nation Index explores attitudes towards key topics and gives us a unique and detailed barometer of health and wellbeing across the UK. From the impact of the pandemic on physical and mental wellbeing and barriers to accessing healthcare, the findings are invaluable and will help show you how to improve workplace wellbeing throughout your organisation.





Our methodology

Conducting our research

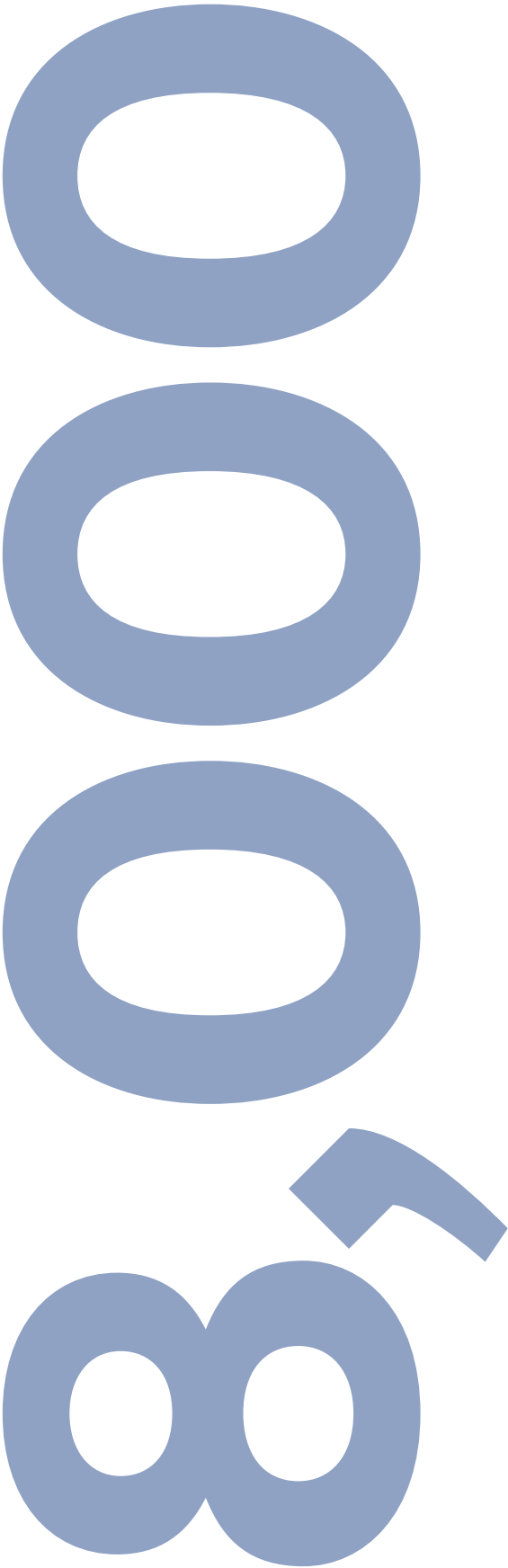
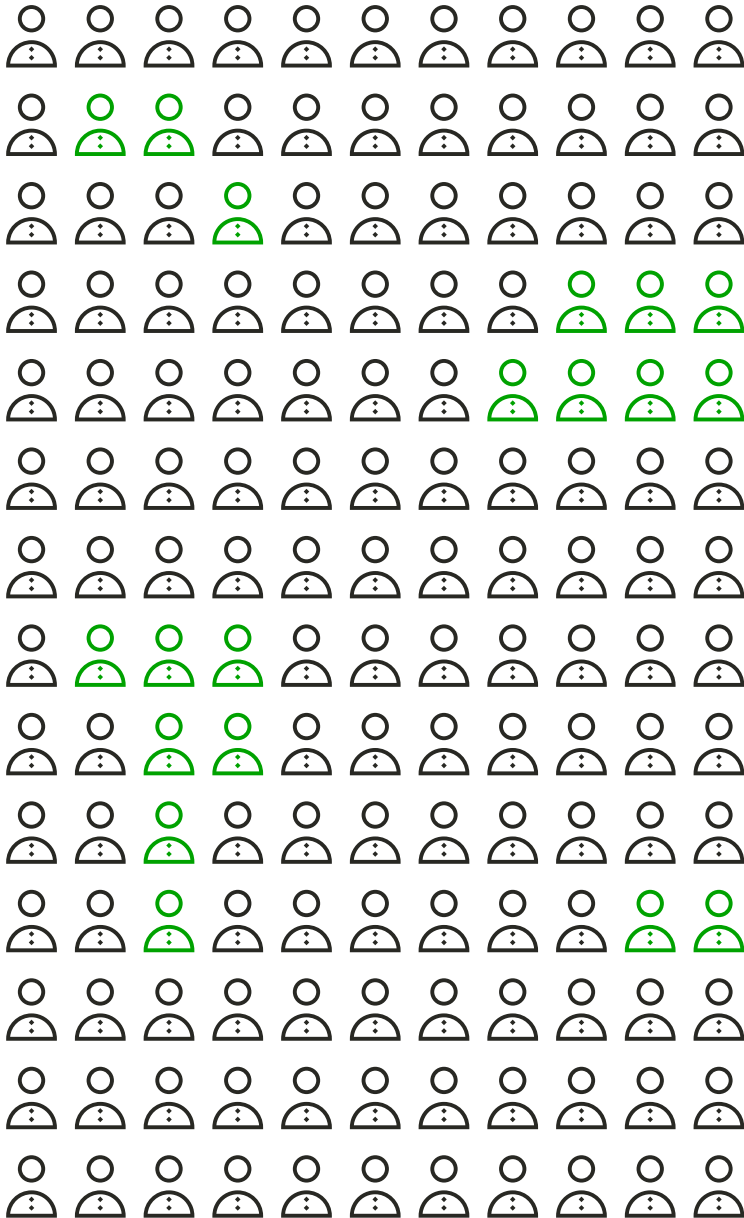
The Healthier Nation Index is unique Nuffield Health-owned annual research, providing one of the most detailed reviews of all aspects of the nation’s physical and mental health.

In particular, it helps shape our understanding of wellbeing in the workplace, how people feel about what their employer has to offer and the kinds of things they’d like to see implemented at work.

Conducted in February 2022 by polling company Censuswide on behalf of Nuffield Health, 8,000 adults (aged 16+) in the UK were asked 30 key questions, with answers split by region, age, gender, ethnicity,

household income and more. The survey was carried out online and the figures have been weighted and are nationally representative, unless indicated otherwise. Censuswide abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society, which is based on the ESOMAR principles.

30
QUESTIONS



PARTICIPANTS

Executive Summary

Our findings since the 2021 Healthier Nation Index



Mental health and work



There was an increase in the number of people who have gone to work even though their mental health was poor (60% in 2022 up from 56% in 2021), with **43% of men calling in sick due to mental health issues** but not telling their employer the real cause. **In fact, 66% of people would not feel comfortable raising a mental health or emotional wellbeing issue with their employer.**

Workplace resources are limited



One third of UK adults are offered no physical or emotional wellbeing support from their employer at all, and just 14% are given mental wellbeing training or education. The enthusiasm for physical activity was there though... **24% of women said they would like their employer to offer free exercise classes** and the figures were highest for people aged 45–54 years old.

Mental and physical health



The research highlights a complex picture of the nations health. **For over a third (34%) mental health has gotten worse. However for almost a quarter (24%) mental health has improved in the last 12 months.**

Physical health has deteriorated for many, with nearly 37% of women and 28% of men saying their physical health had gotten worse in the last 12 months.

Financial Health



33% of men and 44% of women said their financial health was worse – up **5% and 10%** respectively on the previous year.

Over half of people from the lowest income bracket said their financial health had got worse (**54%**) and just over **one in four (26%)** said it had got significantly worse. This is over double that of people from the highest bracket.

Sleep



Of both men and women, **only 37% got the recommended seven to eight hours of sleep per night last month*, falling slightly from 39% this time last year.**

Critically, fewer (**32%**) of people on lower household incomes (£15,000 or less) got the recommended seven to eight hours of sleep per night than (**45%**) people on the highest incomes (over £75,000).

*In the one month prior to the 2022 survey

Barriers to healthy activity and healthcare



47% of adults surveyed believe that adults should be physically active every day however, **60%** see lack of motivation as a barrier to exercise with women and young people more likely to avoid exercise when they 'don't know how to get started'.

Waiting times:
A large number of those surveyed – **53%** – said that **long waiting times** were a barrier when it came to them accessing healthcare services.

Our findings

Providing greater detail. What the Healthier Nation Index 2022 has told us.

Mental health

24%

Almost one in four people say their mental or emotional health has got better in the last year.



34%

Over a third of people say their mental or emotional health has got worse.



28% 39%



Women are 11% more likely than men to say their mental health has got worse in the last 12 months.
2021: 49% of women

25–34 year olds



This age group are most likely to say their mental health had got better (38%).

39%



Of young people (16–24 year olds) said their mental health had got worse.

39%

of people in lowest income bracket said their mental health had got worse.



compared to



23%

of people in highest bracket said their mental health had got worse.

23%

Adoption of self management is rising

With just under a quarter of UK adults (23%) saying they were using more techniques to help with mindset and mental health (such as mindfulness, yoga, meditation etc) than a year ago.



On average 16% more UK adults than the previous year said they were likely to talk to a mental health expert to help look after their mental health. Of these however only 6% of older adults (55+ year olds) were comfortable doing so compared to 28% of young adults (16–24 year olds).

Of those adults reporting increased focus on their own mental health, more women than men have increased the time dedicated to themselves than last year (40% women compared to 31% men).



Respondents spend an average of just 33 minutes a week looking after their mental health.

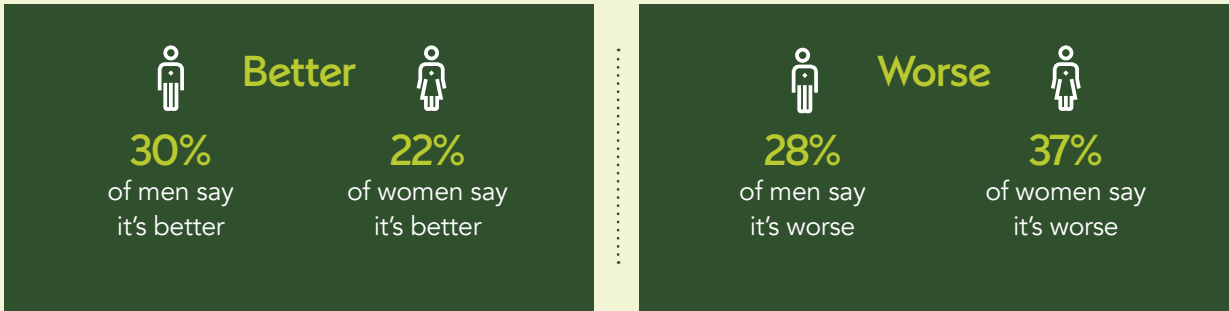
42%

42% of people spent no time looking after their mental health per week (down from 48% in 2021) This trend rises significantly to 61% of the over 55s but dropping to just under 20% of 16–24 year olds.

Physical health

Around one third of respondents say their physical health has got worse in the last year (Tracking the same as 2021 – also around one third) but encouragingly:

26%  say their physical health is better



The highest number of people with worse physical health were from the lowest income bracket (39%). Almost double the number of people in highest bracket who said it was worse (21%).	Double the number of people from highest income bracket said it was better, compared with lowest bracket (41% versus 21%).
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Family relationships

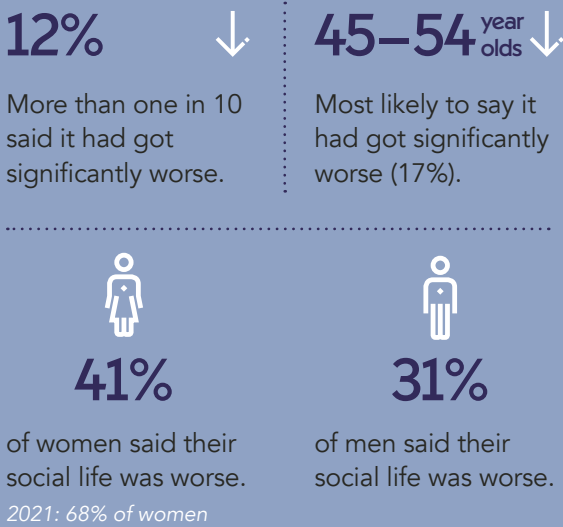


Social life

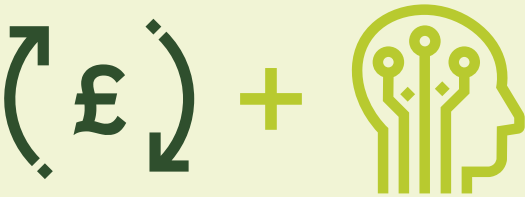
Pandemic impacts on social lives seem to be easing, with one third of people saying their social life had got worse in the last year, nearly halving from the previous year (63%).



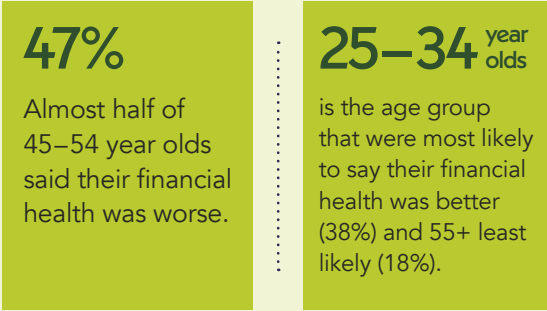
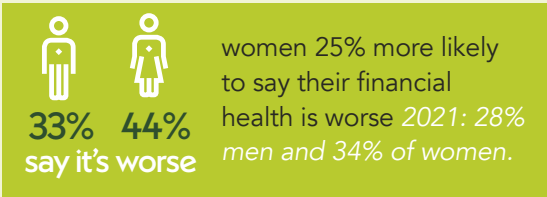
36%  of people said their social life had got worse
Down from 63% in 2021. However, 27% said it had got better this year.



Financial health



39% of participants said their financial health has got worse since 2021 (31%) but 25% said it had got better.



Over half of people from the lowest income bracket (£15,000 or less) said their financial health had got worse (54%) and one in four (26%) said it had got significantly worse. This is over double the number of people from the highest income bracket (Over £75,000), only 21% said their financial situation had got worse, and only 5% said it had got significantly worse.

Pandemic impact – Spotlight



Restrictions and uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic had the biggest negative impact on people’s mental and physical health, with over half of adults struggling with the

impacts. Two in five said that reduced access to healthcare services had a negative impact, and one in five have struggled with long term symptoms of COVID-19.

40%
of UK adults are now more concerned about their physical health because of Covid-19.

34%
One third are more concerned about their parents’ physical health because of Covid-19.

4 in 10
are more concerned about their children’s physical (39%) and mental (43%) health because of Covid-19.

Health impact

The percentage of respondents reporting a negative impact on physical and mental health from money, work, nutrition and alcohol:

Money

49% 2021: 44%

54%
Over half of women said money had a negative impact.
2021: Women 49%

44%
of men said money had a negative impact.

23% Plus, nearly one in four women stated that money had a significant negative impact on health.

57% in the lowest income bracket (£15,000 or less) said money had a significant impact, compared to 42% of the highest income bracket (over £75,000).



Work

48% 2021: 54%

50%
Half of women said work had a negative impact.
2021: Women 58%

45%
of men said work had a negative impact.

17% said work had a significant negative impact.

However, 47% of participants were equally likely to say work had not impacted their health negatively in the last 12 months.



Unhealthy eating habits

43% (No data from 2021)

48%
Nearly half of women said poor nutrition had a negative impact.

38%
of men said poor nutrition had a negative impact.

16-24 year olds Over half of 16–24 year olds (54%) said unhealthy eating had a negative impact and one in five (21%) said it was a significant negative impact.

Just under half (49%) of people said they were overweight, compared with 46% in 2021 (an increase of 3%).

44% people think healthy food is too expensive.



Alcohol

20% 2021:17%

17%
of women said alcohol had a negative impact.

24%
of men said alcohol had a negative impact.

29% of 25-34 year olds said alcohol had a negative impact on health. 2021: 25%

27% of people living in Greater London say that alcohol has had a negative impact in the last 12 months.



Workplace health

60%



of people have gone to work despite their mental health being poor that day, an increase from last year's 56%.

78% to 85%
↑

The biggest increases were among young people aged 16–24 and among men of all ages (increase from 52% to 60%)

46% TIME OFF DUE TO COVID



of people have had time off work due to Covid, with 13% of men and 7% of women saying they have had to do this more than five times.



3.55 DAYS OFF SICK

The average number of days people took off sick for mental health reasons rose slightly from 3.19 in 2021



16-24 YEAR OLDS

are the most likely to need time off work for poor mental health. 67% of 16–24 year olds have called in sick to work because their mental health was poor, but given another reason.



43%

of men have called in sick because of poor mental health, but given their employer a different reason – an increase from 34% last year (for women the number increased only slightly from 32% to 34%).

But some people are getting more comfortable at telling their employer when they need to have time off for their mental health.

Last year 32% of men said they had called in sick to work and told their employer they needed time off because of poor mental health. This year that number had risen to 41%. For women the number was much lower, and steady at 26% for both).

The number of people who say they have had to take time off work for Musculoskeletal Issues has increased from 31% to 37% from 2021 to 2022. The average number of days people take off work for back or neck pain has increased from 1.49 to 1.85 (an increase of 18% year on year).

20%

of women have had time off work due to menopause symptoms (no data for 2021).



56% of people say that poor mental health has made them less productive at work. For men the number rose from 50% in 2021 to 57% in 2022, while for women the number was steady at around 55%

A third of UK adults are offered no physical and emotional wellbeing support by their employer

- One in five UK adults have mental wellbeing policies at work
- 16% are offered resources on how to boost mental and physical wellbeing
- Just 14% are given mental wellbeing training or education
- Only 11% of people said that their employer offered any policies or training around menopause, though 18% of women said they would like this to be offered
- People in high income groups (55k per annum and above) were much more likely to report that their employer offered support for physical and mental health than people in lower income groups
- Higher income groups (65k+) were twice as likely (16%) to say their employer offered menopause policies or training than lower income groups (under 25k) (8%)
- There was demand throughout the income groups for free exercise classes and subsidised or free gym membership – 24% of women and 17% of men said they would like their employer to offer free exercise classes.



77%

of women would not feel comfortable raising a menopause related issue with their employer



66%

of people would not feel comfortable raising a mental health or emotional wellbeing issue with their employer

79%

of men would not feel comfortable raising a childcare issue with their employer

People on lower incomes (under 15k) reported being less comfortable raising any health issues or childcare issues with their employer than people on higher incomes (55k+)



ONLY 30%

of lower income groups felt comfortable raising a physical health issue with their employer compared to 46% of higher income groups



ONLY 28%

of lower income groups felt comfortable raising a mental health issue with their employer compared to 37% of higher income groups




ONLY 15%

of lower income groups felt comfortable raising a childcare issue with their employer compared to 32% of the highest (75k or over per annum) income group

6 HOURS
AVERAGE

74%
OF ADULTS
GOT LOWER QUALITY
SLEEP
OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

80% 
OF WOMAN
AND
 **66%**
OF MEN

35–44
YEAR OLDS GOT THE
LEAST
AMOUNT THAN IN THE
SAME MONTH LAST YEAR

Sleep

Men and women in the UK only got an average 6 hours of sleep per night in the month before the survey, getting slightly less sleep than this time last year at 6.1hrs in 2022 (6.2hrs 2021)

- ♦ Around **37% of men and women got the recommended 7-8 hours of sleep per night in that month**, falling slightly from **39%** this time last year
- ♦ **35–44 year olds got the least amount of sleep in that month**, with almost **50%** only getting five to six hours per night, whilst only **33%** got the recommended seven to eight hours of sleep per night
- ♦ Fewer people (**32%**) on lower household incomes (£15,000 or less) got the recommended seven to eight hours of sleep per night than people (**45%**) on the highest incomes (over £75,000)
- ♦ **20% more people on lower household incomes** (£15,000 or less) said they got lower quality sleep than those on the highest incomes (over £75,000) (**82%** compared to **62%**)
- ♦ **71% of 16–24 year olds have noticed a change in their sleep quantity** and quality over the last 12 months, with **59%** saying they get less sleep and **61%** saying they get lower quality sleep.





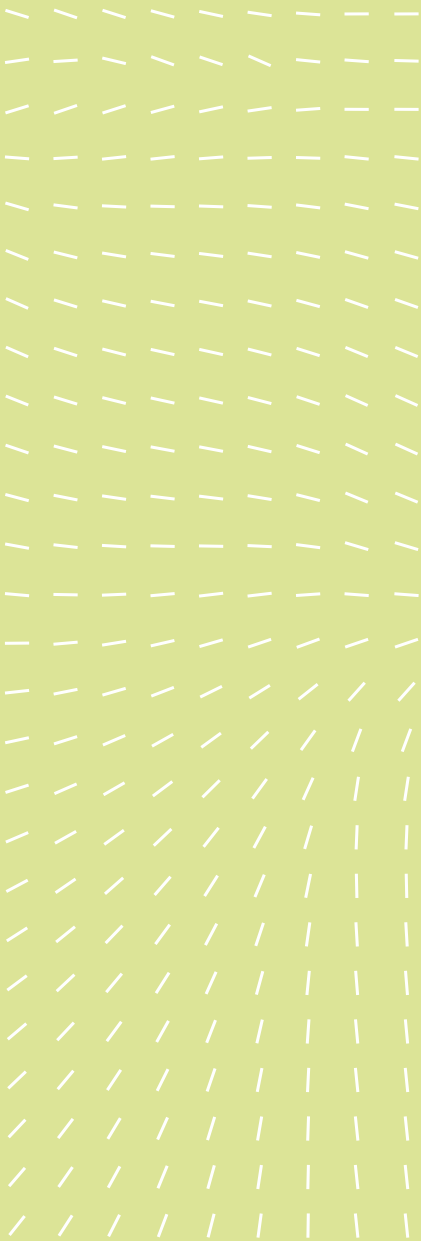
Accessing healthcare

Half of participants say long waiting times are a barrier to access healthcare services.

- The Survey found that ‘difficulty getting an appointment’ and ‘waiting times are too long’ are the **top barriers** to access healthcare services
- **Over half (53%)** said long waiting times were a barrier, with **one in five (22%)** saying they were a ‘significant barrier.’

Getting an appointment is seen as a growing barrier to treatment.

- Half of respondents say difficulty getting an appointment is a barrier to access healthcare – **up from 45% the previous year**
- In 2021, **one in six (17%)** people said difficulty getting an appointment was a ‘significant’ barrier. **This has risen to a quarter (26%) in 2022.**



50%
OF RESPONDENTS
REPORT EXPERIENCING
LONG
WAITING TIMES

Insight

Supporting your organisations healthcare goals

People continue to need more support for their physical and mental health. Plus, employers need to remove the stigma of talking about health issues in order for employees to feel supported and valued.

Communication and action

Workers say they experience discrimination – or fear they will – if they admit to problems with their mental health. It's vitally important that employers embrace their role in not only supporting those who speak up about mental health but encouraging others to do so. A good work culture is one where employees feel that a dialogue about mental health is both welcomed and expected.

- ◆ **Organisations need to change the narrative around mental health.** By reinforcing to employees that everyone has mental health and by promoting an open discussion around mental ill health and mental wellbeing we can help to challenge discrimination
- ◆ **Lead by example** – only by engaging top-level executive sponsors will long term change become embedded across organisational culture
- ◆ **Communicate clearly to staff the concept that mental health exists** on a continuum from good health through to poor health. As such employers should perceive what they can do to support mental health in terms of Enhancement (for those who are mentally fit but want to be fitter), Prevention (for those who are experiencing stress and don't want it to worsen) to Treatment (for those experiencing mental ill health).



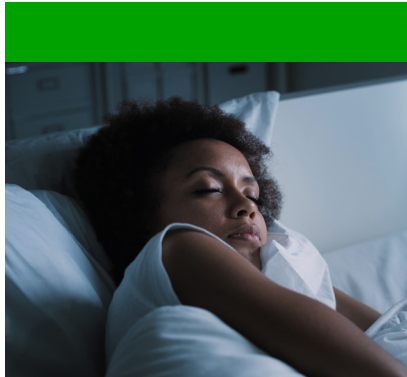
For the future



Removal of barriers to physical activity and the use of physical health support is key to reaching those in lower income brackets who see cost (in both time and money) as the limiting factor to supporting their own physical health.



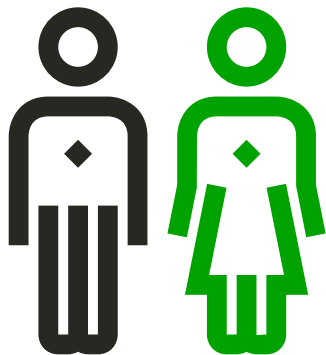
Language matters – organisations need to provide employees with non-medicalised language and conversation guides to enable them to not only discuss their own health, but to support discussions with colleagues too, and feel comfortable doing so.



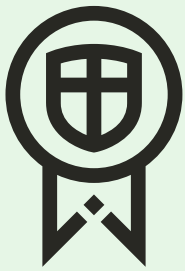
Sleep will continue to be a defining factor in overall health, affecting all aspects of work related healthcare. Whilst organisations may struggle to directly affect individual sleep quality, sleep education and support is key to supporting the wider employee health agenda and represents a key opportunity to drive health engagement and change.

Gender health

- ◆ 2022 will be reflected upon as the year that female health (and health inequality) took centre stage within the workplace wellbeing arena.
- ◆ Employers should ensure a robust programme exists to tackle female health – specifically menstrual health and menopause.
- ◆ For men's health, engagement is key. Both to normalise the narrative around their own health challenges and encourage openness around the female specific health needs of colleagues, friends and family.



How Nuffield Health can help



From preventative, primary and secondary care, right through to recovery and rehabilitation. Our healthcare services are available on-site at work, at home via online services or within the community through our national network of facilities, including:



GP and primary care



Health assessments



Physiotherapy



Mental health



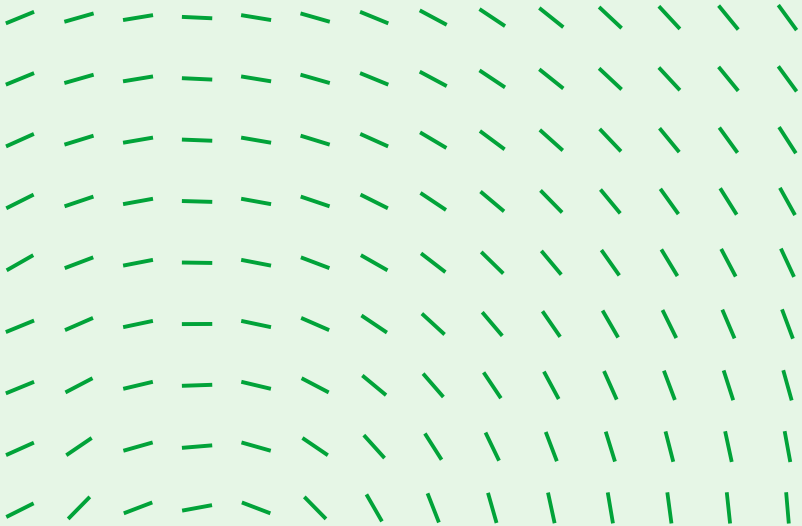
On-site fitness



Digital wellbeing services



Secondary care
diagnostics and hospitals



We understand that every persons journey is different.

Whatever pathway your employees are on, we provide a personal approach to healthcare to support them every step of the way.

With 36 award-winning hospitals, 114 fitness and wellbeing centres, healthcare clinics and over 150 workplace wellbeing sites, Nuffield Health has the breadth of expertise and services to help with your workplace wellbeing strategy and corporate healthcare provision.



To find out more, visit nuffieldhealth.com/corporatehealthcare or email corporate@nuffieldhealth.com



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